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**Speaker Catherine L. Hanaway Address
January 8, 2003**

Building Missouri's Future

Governor, Mr. Secretary, Auditor, Treasurer, General, Mr. Chief Justice, Your Honors, Esteemed Colleagues and Honored Guests, Today, as I take this gavel, I feel its weight-the weight of the responsibility we all share, regardless of party, to build a better Missouri.

For as John Adams said in his inaugural address, "there can be no spectacle by any nation more pleasing, more noble, majestic or august than an assembly like [this] ... selected at regular periods by their neighbors to make and execute laws for the general good."

If you look at this gavel, it really is very much like another tool, a hammer -- a hammer with two heads and no claw. A hammer meant only for building not for tearing down or tearing apart.

All of us have been entrusted by our fellow citizens to build something greater than we have inherited.

First, let's thank those people who helped us get here. Stand up, look into the galleries for your friends and family, wave to them, and applaud with all the gratitude that is in your hearts.

Thank you, members of the House, for choosing me as your Speaker. Thank you, staff members, for your hard work to make the House for the hard work necessary for the transition. Thank you, former members of the House, for the sacrifices you made and your service to this House.

Now, I would like to say a special thank you to my family. My aunt and uncle, Dorothy and Dick Moore, my in-laws, Joe and Nancy Hanaway, my brother, Charles Moore, my sister, Anne Moore, and my parents, Bob and Virginia Moore who have all traveled great distances to be here today.

I thank them for the values they instilled in me, their constant challenge to me to always do my best, and all of their love and support.

Finally, my husband, Chris, and my daughter, Lucy. They have truly made the greatest sacrifices for this day. How do you thank a husband who always puts you before himself or a daughter who is the light of your life? The best I can say is life would not be worth living without you, and I love you with all my heart.

Together, we are setting an uncharted course. There are more new members of this House than ever before, a change in party control for the first time in 48 years and, for the first time in decades, a budget with declining general revenues. We will have less with which we will be expected to do more and do better.

But, we are all leaders and builders. We are the representatives of a great and resilient people.

Together, we can build:

A Missouri where every person who wants a job can find one;
A Missouri where every person regardless of gender, race, creed or color can live their dreams;
A Missouri where every child can get a world-class education from kindergarten through high school and beyond;
A Missouri where the most vulnerable citizens are cared for and treated with dignity;
and, a Missouri that knows the best is yet to come.

We can build a Missouri that begins with accountability and ends with greater opportunity.

This is a grand plan -- A plan that will take time, discipline, sacrifice and hard work. But, Missouri is known for hard work. We have led this country in times of great challenge and opportunity. The farmers of our state have fed the world. The men and women of our factories revolutionized air travel and aerospace. Our scientists have mapped the human genome.

Now, our citizens are facing a very difficult time. A time when those who want to work hard and sacrifice have been denied that chance. During the past 19 months, 77,000 Missourians have lost their jobs. Missouri has led the country in job losses. 77,000 times men and women had to go home and say to their spouses and their children, "honey, I lost my job today."

Nothing has hurt those families and our state more. In a flash, a taxpayer became a tax consumer. In a flash, a person who was gainfully employed, had health insurance and provided for themselves and their family became a person without a job, without health insurance, without the means to care for themselves and their family.

The policies of our state government have driven jobs out of this state and kept others from coming here. Our state government has stifled growth through an economy-eating, ever ballooning budget, through an open door for job-killing frivolous lawsuits, and through regulatory burdens that crush initiative.

Part of the reason the state is facing a budget crisis is because each time a man or woman loses their job, the state loses tax revenue and has to provide services to the unemployed.

No state program can replace a job. We might be able to provide some short-term assistance. But, we can't give back productivity, we can't give back self-respect and self-reliance, we can't give back opportunity, we can't give back dreams.

Therefore, priority-one must be the creation and retention of good jobs.

When we unbridle the ingenuity, the innovation, the drive, and the creativity within in each of our fellow Missourians, we will reach the heights of prosperity, progress and productivity.

Much will be made of our budget situation. Without question, we can no longer afford to do everything state government has been doing. There is not enough money, because we have overspent and overextended. There will be much pressure to try to borrow or tax our way out of these difficult times. The state is collecting less money because our citizens are earning less money. The voters told us twice last year to keep our hands out of their pockets. We must resist the temptation to take more from our citizens at a time when they have less to give.

The table has been set by our fellow Missourians. They want us to spend what we have more wisely. They want us to hold government accountable. They want to know we have set priorities and that we demand performance from every aspect of state government.

To Governor Holden, I say we need your help, and we want to be your partners. We will do all that we can to craft a state budget that serves our state well. But, you must do your part. Do not send us a budget that balances only through tax increases, expansions of gambling, and use of the Rainy Day Fund-do not send us a budget that does not reflect the will of people of Missouri.

To Department Directors and all those who run state programs, I say when you come to this House this year, come prepared. Be prepared to explain what you do, what you hope to do, why it is important, and how we can measure whether you are successful. The vast majority of the men and women who work in state government are hard working people who serve this state well. But, we are now called on to decide what is working and what is most important.

There are also some Missourians who can't provide for themselves. They can't work because they are young or they are old or they are severely disabled. State government has a solemn duty to educate the young, protect the old, and care for the disabled.

Education is the great equalizer. With a quality education, every Missourian can rise to the highest levels of achievement. Public education is the highest priority in our state constitution, and we must live up to that duty. We must also be willing to change the status quo and act boldly and innovatively to improve our schools.

Our seniors deserve dignity, respect and quality care in our nursing homes. Most nursing homes are filled with caregivers who treat residents like a second family. But, for those who abuse or neglect our seniors, we must make clear that they will pay for their actions.

There are almost 13,000 children who are in the custody of the state. We are by law their guardians. We are their stewards. Last year, children died while in our custody. This must not stand. No program, no person, no judge, no caseworker, no foster parent will be able to hide from our quest to root out what is evil in this system.

And, we must also work to protect those children who would be killed even before they are born.

We can build a better Missouri than we have inherited.

I cannot help but think about one of the great builders in my own family - my maternal grandfather - Charlie Mimick.

Grandpa was born in 1898. He was born to large family, without much in the way of material wealth, on the prairies of Nebraska. His first language was Polish, and he had a fourth grade education. But, in his 85 years on this earth he built much of the backbone of this country.

For 50 years, he was a laborer-a bridge builder for the Union Pacific railroad. Throughout, my childhood, he told me

stories of the hardships of life as a bridge builder, how he lived most of the time in a train car, baking in the summer, freezing in the winter, and of the incredible risks they took each day building bridges across great divides. Many men were seriously injured. Some died. Literally, great divides were crossed by building bridges into the air until they reached the other side.

At times, it must have seemed impossible. But, my grandfather and fellow workers didn't see impossibility, they saw possibility. They saw the opportunity to make this country stronger, to get farmers food to people who were hungry, to get medicines to people on the frontier, and to open the West. Along with tens of thousands of men just like him, he built the railroads that opened this country to progress and commerce that united this country from coast-to-coast.

Today, we all begin to answer the call to be builders for the future of Missouri. Not only do we build upon what has gone before, but in many ways we must rebuild the greatness of this state. Like my grandfather, we are going to face enormous challenges-against tremendous odds-and like he and his fellow workers we will have to work as a team to be successful.

The challenges we face were not created in a day, a session, or year; and they won't be solved quickly or easily. But, we can meet these challenges, because our people are strong, able, and willing. The strength of the human spirit will shine through these dark days to bring an even more brilliant dawn.

Each day as I pick-up this gavel, I will ask God, our Father, to give me the strength to wield it with justice, compassion, wisdom and strength. I ask the Almighty to bless the work of this House. God bless you and God bless Missouri.